THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Government of NCT of Delhi have not received any complaint about selling of application forms and prospectus at high prices and charging of high registration fees by the private recognized schools in Delhi. The Government of NCT of Delhi has issued guidelines on 15.12.1999 regarding charging Registration Fee, Admission Fee, Caution Money, Tuition Fee, Annual Charges, Earmarked Levies, Development Fee etc. in respect of all recognized unaided schools. As regards private recognized schools in National Capital Region and other parts of the country, it is for the concerned State Governments to regulate such issues.

Minority institutions deprived of mid-day meal

360. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how many schools managed by the minority institutions in the tribal areas of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat etc. do not get mid-day meal in the primary schools;

(b) why there is such a discrimination for children of BPL families, as the mid-day meal for poor should be universal; and

(c) by when Government proposes to make mid-day meal universal at least for the children of BPL families?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) All children studying in primary classes (I—V) in Government Schools (including Local Body), Government aided schools, including those managed by minority institutions, and centres run under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) are provided mid-day meal. Children of BPL families, in case they are studying in above institutions, have been covered under the programme. The programme has been extended to upper primary stage of education, *i.e.* classes VI—VIII with effect from 1.10.2007, in Government (including Local Body), Government aided schools, and EGS/AIE centres in 3479 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). The number of EBBs covered in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are 203, 75, 203 and 85 respectively. The programme will be extended to all areas across the country from 2008-09.

Children out of school

361. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that seven million children in the age group of 6 to 14 years are still out of school;

(b) whether Government would make education a fundamental right and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government would allocate separate funds to the States to establish primary schools; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has made considerable progress in enhancing access to elementary education. From 4.4 crore children who were out of school in 2001, the number came down to 75.9 lakh in 2007, as per State reports. These constitute the most difficult to access group of children.

(b) The Constitutional (Eighty-Sixth) Amendment act, 2002 notified on 13th December, 2002, inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution, which provides that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine".

(c) to (d) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an ongoing programme which provides for *inter-alia,* opening of primary and upper primary schools.

Enrolment of children in schools

362. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether one crore children do not enroll in schools on attaining the age of five;

(b) whether in Uttar Pradesh alone, 10 children do not attend the school and 50 per cent drop out after the fifth standard;

(c) if so, whether Government has made any comprehensive plan and allocation under the Eleventh Five Year Plan; and

(d) what allocation has been made for Uttar Pradesh in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) As per State reports, as on March, 2007 about 75.97 lakhs children were out of schools in the 6-14 years age group.

(b) The drop-out rates in Uttar Pradesh in 2004-05, at primary stage (Classes I-V) was 12.06 per cent. As per the State report of Uttar Pradesh the number of out of school children was 7.8 lakhs in March, 2007

(c) and (d) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an ongoing programme for unviersalisation of elementary education. The outlay for Eleventh Plan as indicated by the Planning Commission is Rs. 71,000 crore. An allocation of Rs. 3441.52 crore has been made to Uttar Pradesh for the current financial year 2007-08.

NCERT's recommendation on optional examination

363. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NCERT's revised National Curriculum Framework has recommended to make class X examination optional, togetherwith earlier recommendations on eliminating pass/fail terminology for reducing students' mental stress;

(b) if so, the details of recommendations made by NCF on curriculum and Government's response thereto;

(c) whether Government is considering those suggestions to implement in the country; and